

COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE
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JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE COMMISSION ISSUES
DECISION AND ORDER IMPOSING PUBLIC CENSURE
OF FORMER COMMISSIONER ANN DOBBS
AND BARS HER FROM RECEIVING ASSIGNMENTS

The Commission on Judicial Performance has issued a Decision and Order of Public Censure of former commissioner Ann Dobbs of the Los Angeles County Superior Court pursuant to stipulation (Commission Rule 116.5) and bars her from receiving assignments, appointments, or references of work from any California state court. The Decision and Order is available on the commission's Web site at www.cjp.ca.gov (under "Pending Cases – Press Releases and Documents" and "Decisions on Commission Cases – 1960 to Present") and at the commission's office.

Former commissioner Ann Dobbs served in the Family Law Department of the Los Angeles Superior Court from March 2001 until October 31, 2007, when she retired. Ms. Dobbs failed to decide numerous cases in a timely manner. In California, judicial officers are expected to decide cases within 90 days of the date they are taken under submission. When Ms. Dobbs retired, 15 cases over which she had presided had been under submission for over 90 days without her having decided them, and another 14 cases that she had under submission for less than 90 days had not been decided. Ms. Dobbs never decided any of these cases, causing significant harm to the family law litigants and to the court, and seriously undermining the integrity of the judiciary. Former commissioner Dobbs also failed to provide responses to her supervising judge concerning complaints from litigants about the delays in their cases. The commission determined that former commissioner Dobbs's misconduct violated the Code of Judicial Ethics and constituted prejudicial misconduct. In its decision, the commission stated, "Commissioner Dobbs's failure to timely complete so many of her cases over a substantial period of time convinces the commission that there is a strong likelihood that the same pattern of delayed rulings on submitted matters would continue if she were to serve as a judicial officer in the future. Through her misconduct, the commissioner demonstrated an unconscionable disregard for the rights of litigants and the reputation of the judiciary."

Pursuant to the Stipulation, Ms. Dobbs has agreed not to seek or hold judicial office, or accept a position or assignment as a judicial officer, subordinate judicial officer or judge pro tem with any court in the State of California, or accept a reference of work from any California state court, at any time in the future.

This matter will be referred to the State Bar of California for any action the State Bar may deem appropriate with respect to Ms. Dobbs's practice of law.

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The commission is composed of three judges, two lawyers, and six public members. The Chairperson is the Hon. Judith D. McConnell of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, in San Diego, California.

For further information about the Commission on Judicial Performance, see the commission's Web page at www.cjp.ca.gov.